

Hello! Welcome to the information session on Tacoma Community College's Health and Wellness Program Pathways. This will give you a general overview of the Health Sciences available through TCC. Thanks for joining me today. My hope is to answer some of the specific questions you have related to our programs of course, but also give you a sense of whether or not you would like to move forward, and what those next steps might look like.

*People come to college for a variety of reasons. Here are just a few that come to mind. Maybe you are just wanting to check it out today. You might be facing some kind of transition with career or school. You might be leaving the military, be recently unemployed (or hoping for a job change or promotion). Maybe you are brand new to college, and want to look at your options. These are all perfectly good reasons to be here. Even if your reason for being here isn't listed, know you are in the right place, and you can consider being a part of this as forward progress. So let's get started.

*The programs I am specifically going to talk about today include:

- Diagnostic Medical Sonography
- Emergency Medical Services
- Health Information Technology
- Nuclear Medicine Technology
- Nursing
- Radiologic Science
- Respiratory Therapy
- Two bachelor degree programs, the Baccalaureate of Applied Science (or BAS) for Health Information Management and the BAS for Community Health.
- We also have the option of an Associate of Applied Science Transfer degree in Allied Health.

* I want to tell you a little bit about the facility we work in. The Harned Center for Health Careers was built about seven years ago, in part by state funds, but also with the largest private donation in the over 50-year history of the college. It was these extra funds that allowed us to ensure that students are being trained in state-of-the-art classrooms and labs, using equipment that is currently being used in the health care industry.

In fact, we are in the practice of renting out our facility to health care organizations, as a location for them to provide professional development for their current employees.

*We strongly encourage all prospective students to spend some time researching their future occupation of choice to ensure they have a good understanding of their career choice. A great web page I recommend is Career Coach. You can find this on the TCC website at tacomacc.edu. Type in the words, "career coach" in the search bar and you should find links to the career center and/or the career coach page.

Once you are on the Career Coach site, you could enter in your occupation of choice in the search bar. For example, if I were thinking of becoming a Registered Nurse, I would enter this in the search bar and several options would come up which include the term "nurse" in their description. I could click on any of the options, and it would provide great detail related to the daily tasks. Read through them and think about if you could really picture yourself working in this capacity.

We see a large number of students who are interested in working in health care, but many of them really don't understand what it would be like to provide personalized services for all walks of life, when they are severely sick or injured. Often when people are receiving services, they are not happy to be there. They may be in pain, and/or experiencing significant stress, anxiety, or fear. These aren't usually good indicators for the best behavior. Think about whether you have it within you to provide empathy to others in these types of scenarios for a 12 hour shift, and then turn around and come back and do it again the next day. Case in point, with COVID-19, health care is not a glamorous job. It can be grueling and heartbreaking. You may be exposing yourself to illness, and may have to great take pains to prevent bringing it home to your family and friends. Ask yourself if you can really do it. Every day.

Other perks of the Career Coach site include typical educational attainment levels and wages for our area. What I like most about this site is it provides regionalized data. So, your research can be specialized for either the Seattle-Tacoma area, Lacey/Olympia, or Silverdale/Bremerton.

It also will list current job postings. I think it is worth at least five minutes of your time to research the return on investment – job prospects – for the investment of your time, effort and finances to know what kinds of jobs are out there for our graduates. Career Coach is updated every 10 weeks.

* I strongly encourage you to also review the web pages for your programs of interest. Several of them have specific application processes, and will have things titled "application packet". It is important to read these a few times to help you thoroughly understand the requirements to apply – and these are subject to change!. This is definitely a case of "what you don't know could hurt you."

In those packets you will find information related to course pre-requisites (classes you must take prior to applying to the program), program information related to costs, educational planning, technical standards, and accreditation information. They may have forms to submit as part of your application, they will tell you the steps to apply, and deadline information.

Also, some of the programs offer what we call a "Virtual Information Session", which offer particular insight into what students can expect when they enter the program and later, the profession. Additionally, program admission web pages offer a place for us to easily share any updates related to pending application cycles.

*As we move into the different programs, it is important to note that many of them will have slides similar to this. I will not read them to you, but I do want you take note of the program's accreditation status.

TCC is, of course, accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. However, many of our health science programs have also obtained accreditation from national entities, specializing in the area of focus. Why is this important? It tells you, as the consumer of educational services, that the program you are interested in has undergone a continuous review and improvement process. TCC is always looking for ways to ensure that our students are being taught at the highest level possible.

This is also important because at the end of your degree program, you cannot automatically go out and work in the field. The degree only allows you to sit for a certification exam. If you don't pass, you will not be able to work. Therefore, you can see why it is important to know that the program you invest in,

is teaching to high standards and will offer a high probability of successful passing of the certification exam.

So in looking at the Diagnostic Medical Sonography program, we offer an Associate of Applied Science degree. The slide says it is full-time, and takes 21 months to complete. But, I think this can be a bit misleading. This amount of time only represents the time spent enrolled in the program – ONCE YOU ARE ACCEPTED INTO THE PROGRAM. This does not include the time spent completing pre-requisite courses, or the time waiting until the cohort begins, or the time afterwards while you are waiting for certification exams and their results. So, when you see time frames on similar slides, please keep this in mind.

*So what is Sonography?

Sonographers use imaging equipment that non-invasively emits sound waves directed towards internal organs, blood vessels, tissues and other structures.

They can identify trauma (lacerations), cysts (types, e.g. caused by parasites, infection), lesions, tumors, blood flow to internal organs.

They can also assist with guided biopsies, or work with teams of specialists, e.g. radiologist (CT Scans), physicians

It sounds strange to say it, but it is important to say Sonography is diagnostic in nature. That is to say, the quality of the images taken by the sonographer will have significant impact on the patient diagnosis. The sonographer is trained to see if something doesn't look right and will investigate to determine what other situations might exist. It is also important to note that the sonographer should be very comfortable working with machinery and troubleshooting.

In Sonography, it is you, the machine and the patient. If the machine is not doing what you think it should be doing, or you aren't getting the quality of pictures you need, you can't just ask the person next to you for help. It is important to be comfortable working with machinery and troubleshooting on your own.

*Some work skills and abilities for sonography might include:

Being able to Communicate – This means explaining procedures, making the patient comfortable, and being a good listener.

Perceiving and Visualizing – If something doesn't look right, then it is important to look further.

Reasoning, Problem Solving, Working with People and Things – Again, it is important to be comfortable working with high tech machinery.

As far as the application goes – again, be sure to read the application packet available online for the program of interest.

We will occasionally change our packet to reflect a new online application process. When reading this, be sure to take a look at the revision date. There may be new information from the last time you reviewed it.

For applicants to DMS, we will award points for grades and direct patient care. There are guidelines available in the packet online.

Additionally, the DMS program has a 5-7year math/science recommendation for the pre-requisite courses. That means these courses should be completed within the last five-seven years prior to application.

Part of our health science programs includes clinical practice, when students go out to our health care organization partners and work on actual people – real, live patients. It is also important to note that clinical sites can be far-reaching. You might be scheduled to work at a site in Olympia, or you might have to go up to Harrison hospital in Silverdale. More than likely, you will be assigned to a location that meets the needs for your educational programming, and the shifts may be in the afternoon or evening.

We are very dependent upon our clinical partners to provide these opportunities for our students. We usually accept opportunities when they are offered. Do not plan on picking your schedule or location for clinical practice.

So, some data for the DMS cohort that started last fall...

For the accepted cohort of students, the average GPA was a 3.94 and the average number of healthcare experience for accepted candidates was over 4,000. These numbers are subject to change depending on each year's applicant pool. However, this data should tell you that it is critical for interested students to obtain very high grades in their pre-requisites courses and should likely commit to volunteering or working in direct patient care prior to application.

The total applicants in 2021 was nearly double any prior year's applications at 168. TCC was able to accept 17 of those applicants.

*Let's move on to the Emergency Medical and Health Services program. This is one of the programs that offer several options for students. Specifically, we offer the Emergency Medical Technician (Basic) Certificate. It is a 12 credit program, and it can be completed within one quarter, or ten weeks. This has an application process. We offer EMT courses usually every quarter and have been averaging 3 cohorts per quarter.

*If students work for a year as an EMT, they can come back and apply to our Paramedic program, which takes about an additional year to complete. Students in the Paramedic Program could pick up an additional 42 credits to earn their Associate of Applied Science degree in Emergency Medical and Health Services.

*So what kinds of things do you do in EMS? **Emergency Medical Technicians/Paramedics** respond to calls from dispatchers, determine the nature and extent of the illness or injury, they may provide emergency care, and if needed, drive patients to medical facilities.

This is an occupation that is often described as perfect for the adrenaline junkie. In emergency medicine, each type of call can be vastly different. For example, you could be called to the home of an elderly person who is experiencing vertigo. In that instance, you may enter a very comfortable home environment, where the lighting is good and the atmosphere is calm...Or, you could be called to the scene of a conflict – let's say it's a car crash. It could be broad daylight or the middle of the night with very limited lighting. It could be very hot, or a day when it is raining sideways. There could be very aggravated and stressed people at the scene which can provide additional challenges. The patient could be stuck in the vehicle, or even unconscious. The EMS professional must be capable of maintaining calm professionalism, and basically weed out the extraneous factors to focus on the key issues related to

their patient, using critical thinking and best judgement to determine what is needed for the patient's survival.

Some skills and abilities required for the work are similar to many other health science occupations. Interpersonal communication skills are incredibly important. As described, the physical work conditions can widely vary, and equally important are the abilities to reason and problem solve, use math and science, perceive and visualize, and manage people/things/time in stressful situations. Another thing to consider when you decide to enter a health care career...People don't get sick Monday through Friday between 8-5 p.m. At least, that is not when my family gets sick! Folks entering this line of work should expect to work odd hours, particularly as a newbie to the industry.

*So, some cool things about our EMS program...We have one of the only accredited training programs in the state. With our private donation to help build the Harned Center, we were able to purchase a mobile medic unit – an ambulance to practice in before the student's experience gets real.

In the scope of their first quarter of training, EMT's will learn about patient assessment, vital signs, monitoring devices, IV therapy, airway management, intubation, pharmacology, medication administration, workforce safety, medical/legal issues, lifting and moving patients, pathophysiology, injuries, obstetric, pediatrics, geriatrics, and much more.

It is not uncommon for students to take the EMT course when their program of choice is not EMS. Why is that? When you look at the broad topics covered in the curriculum, it certainly won't hurt anyone in preparation for the pre-requisites for many of the health science programs. Also, if someone is interested in applying for a program that offers extra points towards their application if they have direct patient care experience, the 1 quarter EMT certificate offers a way for them to start working in health care quickly to start accruing hours.

As far as pre-requisites for the EMT – Basic Certificate:

An application is required! It will require assessment/placement into ENGL 85 or proof that you have taken English above this academic level.

Students also need to turn 18 years old at some point during the quarter, to enable their participation in clinical site ride-alongs.

The Paramedic Certificate option is a bit different. An application is also required. Being selected is dependent upon a written and a practical skills test.

Pre-requisites include:

1 year EMT work experience

BIOL&175 or 170 Placement into ENGL&101

HIT 130 Placement into MATH 90

As a reminder, you can also earn an Associates of Applied Science in Emergency Medical and Health Services by taking an additional 42 credits.

*Moving on to Health Information Technology

Here again, we offer several program options for students.

- ▶ Medical Scribe (19-24 credits). If you don't know what it is, a Medical Scribe would be someone who documents doctor visits. You may have seen this when you go see your

doctor and alongside them is someone taking notes. This increases efficiency in health care.

- ▶ Medical Billing Certificate (45 credits) – It is important to note that this is a stand-alone certificate. It has very prescribed curriculum and a large portion of the credits in this certificate will not carry over to the degree option.
- ▶ TCC offers an Associate in Applied Science (104 credits), where you could sit for the exam to earn the RHIT credential.
- ▶ Additionally, TCC offers a Bachelor of Applied Science Health Information Management (90 credits), which we will talk about later.

***So what can Health Information Technicians do? They may be referred to as** Medical Records Technicians. Essentially it can be anyone who works to collect, code, and maintain medical information about patients to include details regarding symptoms, medical history, test results, x-rays, diagnoses, and treatment plans.

So many of the work requirements – skills/abilities are the same as we have already discussed:

Interpersonal communication is very key to enable you to work on teams with internal and external partners and the individual patients. The quality of work performance is imperative, as the work you do follows the patient and can directly impact their health. It is important to reason and problem solve, and manage people/things/time. It is also very important to have computer skills because everything is taken online in this program.

*Some cool info about our HIT program, is that it is one of only three accredited training programs in the state. There is no application process, it is a first-come, first-served enrollment.

If you are considering this program option, I strongly encourage you to research career options through <https://my.ahima.org/careermap> available through the web page. I have advised students for a long time and this site is hands down, the most program-specific career research tool I have ever seen. It really is quite good and includes details about beginning, intermediate, and advanced-level positions within Health Information Technology.

I asked the faculty about the biggest reason for attrition – or in other words, if students aren't successful in this program, what is the biggest reason for it? The answer was that online students underestimate the rigor of coursework and the amount of time it takes to complete.

A personal story: I remember taking an online class about 18 years ago. I worked full-time, and had two small children at home. I thought it was such a great idea because I figured I could work during the day, pick up my kids from daycare, come home and start dinner, get some quality time with the kids, go through the bedtime routine, and then, after they finally went to sleep, I could start my laundry around 11 p.m. and then do my online coursework. I quickly realized that I was failing my courses in a very dramatic fashion.

It is important to know that online courses require commitment to schedule planning, organization, and time management. For every college credit a student takes, you should multiply that number by 3-4 hours to figure study time/prep time.

*Then we have our Human Services Program, which supports professionals seeking to support the behavioral and mental health needs of patients. Here again, we offer an Associates degree, and two

different certificates, including the Chemical Dependency Certificate, which meets the educational competencies required by the WA state Department of Health for Chemical Dependency Professional certification.

*Next we have Nuclear Medicine - This is a relatively new and unique program for us. This allows you to earn an Associate's degree. It is a full-time program and is 18 months in duration – again, remember this figure represents the duration from the time you are accepted into the program and start your courses. It is unique for TCC in that it is offered in partnership with Bellevue College, Columbia Basin College, and local hospitals.

*So what do NMTs do? Nuclear Medicine Technologists essentially inject radiopharmaceuticals into the body. Using high-tech cameras, technologists create images to provide information about the structure and function of virtually every major organ system within the body.

The work requirements – skills/abilities are much the same as the others: Interpersonal communication, analytical and critical thinking skills, strong aptitude and academic background in science, and ability to handle multiple tasks efficiently are essential. Participants in the program should enjoy the technical aspects of advanced medical technology. Again, this is an occupation where being comfortable with troubleshooting machinery is really important.

*So some interesting features about this program: There is one training option in Washington State, and one cohort offered.

The Cohort size includes 12 people statewide – 2 of these are based out of TCC.

While here, students can attend classroom portion via two-way videoconferencing. These students sit in a classroom with a large screen projecting the other classrooms across the state. They can see the projection screen from the instructor also.

So, out of the 18 month program, 6 months are spent in a two way video conference, the other 12 months of clinical practice are spent with certified, local NMTs.

Application requirements include attending an advising/info session. Interviews are typically required and held in March, they usually require in-field observations, and a few other things. If you go to the TCC NMT web page you will find a nice link to the Bellevue College site. They are the lead for this program. I highly recommend you refer to Bellevue College's web page for application information. Once there, you can attend the virtual information session, and there is a nice contact feature for your individualized questions, which directly connects you to the Program Faculty's email.

*Nursing

So, we have a few program options available in Nursing.

First, we offer the Nursing Assistant Certificate (or NAC) which can be completed in 1-2 quarters. Normally, this type of program can be accomplished in one quarter, but TCC's program follows the IBEST model, which stands for Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training. It is where we have the technical skills training and add in extra supports for building English and Math skills. Our program is the English Language Learner Option, primarily designed to serve our refugee and immigrant population.

We also have an option called the Direct Transfer Degree (DTA/MRP) – this stands for Direct Transfer Agreement, Major Ready Program – Essentially meaning that we offer an Associate Degree in Nursing,

wherein at the end, students could test to begin working as a Registered Nurse and/or continue their education towards a BSN. The Associate degree program is offered on a full time basis and takes 6 quarters from start to finish.

We have the LPN to RN bridge program into our Associate degree in Nursing. This usually runs for one full year - Winter quarter through Fall.

And then in addition to that, we offer the Pre-nursing transfer degree – for students who plan on earning their Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) as their primary intent.

*So what do nurses do?

Registered Nurses can perform a wide variety of job duties, caring for and educating patients, establishing trust and building rapport with patients and their families, and working as a team. They can perform duties such as observing and recording patient behavior, operating medical equipment, supervising others, performing tests, treating medical emergencies, administering medication and treatment.

So here again, the work requirements – skills/and abilities are very similar. In light of the typical job duties, you can easily understand the value of good Interpersonal communication skills, physical work conditions can be quite strenuous, there is a strong need to be able to reason and problem solve, perceive and visualize things, and be a good manager of people/things/time.

*Some interesting things about the TCC Nursing program:

- ▶ We have one of the largest programs in the state, small class size
- ▶ Cohorts start every Fall, Winter, Spring
- ▶ The program is competitive, and selecting candidates using a weighted lottery for admission

In terms of application information, it is really important to not only READ the packet, but also to attend a Nursing info session! These are typically offered once a month and you can find these dates on the Nursing program web page.

In reviewing applications, TCC assesses points for grades in the pre-requisite courses, service in the military, and the # credits taken at TCC. To apply, there are requirements for patient care – you must have either a NAC or LPN credential, applicants must also have taken the TEAS exam, the Test for Essential Academic Skills

There is no expiration for pre-requisite classes, but there are grade requirements for the pre-requisites, and there is a 2 attempt rule. In other words, you are only allowed two attempts at a particular pre-requisite course in a five year period.

It is also important to know that the clinical sites can far-reaching.

*We also offer an Associates of Applied Science in Radiologic Science. This is an 8 quarter program - again, this is once you are accepted into the program.

*What do Radiologic Technologists do?

Essentially, they use special equipment to create images of internal organs, tissues, and bones to assist doctors in identifying and treating medical problems.

Again, you will see similar work requirements – skills/abilities: Interpersonal communication is key to help explain procedures to patients. Consider the physical work conditions and the need to physically help lift and move patients and get in their space. Quality work performance is critical, as is being a manager of people/things/time, perceiving and visualizing what things should look like, and reasoning and problem solving when things don't look like they should. Again, the clinical sites can be far-reaching.

As far as application Info: READ the application packet available on the web page.

In selecting candidates for the program, Radiology considers points for grades, and direct patient care experience. It used to be that a visitation in a Diagnostic Radiology Department was required. In light of COVID – 19, this requirement has been suspended.

It is important to know that there is a 5-7 year math/science recommendation for the pre-requisites. Some data to consider for the 2021 application cycle: The total number of applicants was an unprecedented 156, and TCC was able to take 40 of those to fill daytime/evening cohorts. The average Candidate GPA in 2021: 3.56. The average candidate had over 4,700 hours of direct patient care experience.

*Some other cool stuff to share about the TCC Radiology program:

TCC offers a small teacher/student ratio .

The lab is equipped with 3 complete radiography rooms.

TCC has a C Arm, which is used to assist with surgeries to ensure accuracy in implants or surgical repair.

The lab offers a [Fluoroscopy](#) room where you can get real-time moving images to track movement

And TCC has our own CT scanner! I am told we are the only community college in the nation to have their own CT scanner.

*For Respiratory Therapy, we offer an Associate of Applied Science degree. Cohorts begin every fall. It takes 7 quarters start to finish – again this is once you are accepted into the program.

*Functions of a Respiratory therapist can widely vary. They will be asked to evaluate a patient's lung capacity, current oxygen and acidity levels; treat patients with things like aerosol medications, chest physiotherapy, ventilation, and care for patients with breathing disorders, such as undeveloped lungs, chronic conditions, and emergencies.

For work requirements – skills/abilities, prospective students should have strong interpersonal communication skills, the physical work conditions can also be very physical. They need to perceive and visualize what should be happening with a patient, and if it doesn't look right, use reasoning and problem solving. They also should be comfortable managing people/things/time.

As far as the application process: READ the packet on the web page!

The RT program selects its candidates by assessing points for grades in the pre-requisites courses, points for direct patient care, and points for additional math/science.

The Respiratory Therapy program has 5-7 year math/science time recommendation for the pre-requisites for the program.

Some data I can report for the *2021 application cycle. We had 31 total applicants and were able to accept: 16. The average GPA for the accepted candidates was a 3.58, and average direct patient care hours reported at over 2,000.

*This applies to all programs, really. In light of what I've shared with you about working skills/abilities. In this case, critical thinking skills are essential. In treating a patient and administering treatment, one should consider the patient's height/weight/sex, different air flow systems, percentages of oxygen, lung capacity, respiration rate, and even the patient's anxiety levels. Students can struggle with this if they are used to educational environments where they practiced regurgitating information. The good news is that students learn how to be better at critical thinking, it can just be a vulnerable position to be in while you learn in an environment where critical thinking is at the base of everything you do.

All of our programs have also adopted the flipped classroom model. This is a departure from traditional face-to-face education that many of us are used to, where the student goes to class, listens to the instructor talk for an hour or an hour and a half, and then the student goes home to try to absorb the information. In a flipped classroom setting, there is a high expectation for the student to do independent learning before coming to the class. In the flipped classroom, the instructor will provide a brief overview, and then spend most of the time in class actually facilitating the student's learning while they apply the concepts.

Another thing to share related to the Respiratory Therapy program is that the bachelor degree is becoming the industry standard. Right now, our graduates are doing well, they finish their associates of applied science and sit for their certification exam, and they are easily finding work. The industry is changing however, and moving toward more baccalaureate prepared RTs.

If you are interested in Respiratory Therapy, the Program Chair Greg Carter has indicated he is willing to talk more with you about the program and industry. He can be reached at gcarte@tacomacc.edu.

In response to industry, TCC has developed two Baccalaureate of Applied Science degrees in health sciences. The first is the BAS in Community Health.

Here the focus is on awareness and prevention, building on clinical knowledge from health care or human services.

Therefore, the pre-requisites include a related professional-technical degree or non-related degree with health care experience and particular course requirements.

Within the BAS in Community Health, there are 4 Specializations: Advanced Respiratory Care, Community Health Professional, Paramedicine – Critical Care Transport, and some Pre-Medicine.

*The second degree is the Baccalaureate of Applied Science in Health Information Management.

This is an administrative healthcare baccalaureate degree, which incorporates disciplines of medicine, management, finance, information technology, and law. Positions in Health Information Management include those that lead efforts to analyze and protect a patient's medical information.

Our Baccalaureates are designed for working professionals and are taken 100% online

The degree is 90 credits and can be completed in 6 quarters if courses are taken on a full-time basis.

Another option is to attend on a part time basis.

The Application is available online, and enrollment in the program is on a first-come, first-served basis.

If you have any ???'s, please reach out to bachelordegrees@tacomacc.edu. The Bachelor degree programs have a full-time Navigator (Advisor) to assist you with the enrollment process.

*Okay. We made it through the list. You probably have your focus on one of these options. So this slide is really to talk about identifying a Plan B or even a Plan C, just in case. Because sometimes it happens that you do everything right, and despite your best efforts, it doesn't come together. You may have done everything right. You may have met with an advisor and perfectly planned out all of the pre-requisites. You may have finished the required classes and earned wonderful grades and you completed the online application before the deadline. You did everything right. And then...you find out that you didn't get in. Many of these programs have more qualified applicants than spaces available.

It can feel devastating. So, what can you do if this happens to you? You might consider

- ▶ Same goal, different college – there are several area colleges that provide a variety of health care education options.
- ▶ AAS-T Allied Health – All of those pre-requisites count for something. If you took the path of earning a certificate in one of our programs, this would contribute towards necessary credits to earn this degree.
- ▶ Associate of Arts/DTA – Again, those credits count! They could also count for credits required to earn the highly transferable Associate of Arts degree.
- ▶ Consider career training options at TCC – There are several options in health care offered at TCC where many of the pre-requisites would apply. There are also career training programs that aren't specifically in health care education, but the occupations can be found in the health care industry.
- ▶ Career Training options elsewhere – Again, there are many area colleges that provide health care education options.
- ▶ Certificates/Degrees – I illustrated today that there are several opportunities to get started working in health care with a short term certificate.
- ▶ Then there are the Baccalaureate of Applied Science (BAS) options – There are 34 state community and technical colleges, and 29 of them now offer baccalaureate degrees. These are definitely another option to consider when thinking about potential Plan B alternatives. To find out more, you can go to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges' website, and search for BAS to find the current listing of colleges who offer BAS programs.

*Here is a somewhat outdated slide of all of the programs TCC offers, and their pre-requisites. Once it is published, it typically changes. I share it because it demonstrates the general similarity amongst pre-requisites among the different health science programs. Again, please know that these are subject to change. Again, I always refer people to the program web pages to get the most recently updated information.

*I would like to share with you a few things that need to be in place once you are accepted into a health science program. Specifically, I would like to call out immunizations. Our clinical partners all require our students to be current on their immunizations or be able to prove their immunity by titer. I am not suggesting you rush out and get all of your immunizations, unless you want to. What I am suggesting is that, the next time you are at the doctor's office, you might request copies of your immunizations and start keeping a file of those records. This makes it a lot easier to identify what immunizations would still be needed before you can attend the clinical portion of your education.

I would also say, too, that the tuberculosis TB test is a very detailed process. Any variation from the established protocol will entail a redo. Again, if you want to go out and get tested for TB, please feel free to do so. However, it is very likely that you will need to redo it when you are admitted to the program.

And of course, there is the COVID-19 immunization. All TCC students are required to demonstrate full COVID-19 vaccination status at least two weeks prior to participation in on-campus courses. Students may apply for a religious or medical exemption. If an exemption is granted, this does not guarantee that the student will be allowed to participate in clinical activities with our healthcare partners. In fact, as circumstances change with the pandemic, so do onboarding protocols for our health care partners. It is likely that an exemption would preclude the student's ability to progress in their program. So, in other words get your vaccination if you plan to finish your health education program. You may find yourself investing your time and resources into education, only to be suspended from the program due to an inability to progress.

To participate in clinical practice, it is also required that students participate in a comprehensive criminal background check. So, if there is something in your background that you think could possibly show up on a background check, it is important to research now if this will serve as a barrier to employment or licensure. TCC will work to try to find a clinical site that will accept your clinical background, but please know there is no guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Also, TCC cannot require their students to participate in a drug screen, but our clinical partners can and will require it. I share this story regularly, but I will not forget attending a meeting with Good Samaritan Hospital and they were discussing their current need to hire more RNs. They said they interviewed one particular nurse and they absolutely loved her. She started going through the hiring process, and she tested positive for nicotine. They had to ask her to please reapply in six months. So, the moral of the lesson is that health care partners will not be interested in you if you have a drug use issue. I am not saying that prescription drugs are an issue, but recreational use of drugs – even nicotine can serve as a barrier to employment.

*So my hope today is that everyone listening to this leaves with a clear understanding of the steps to help them move forward.

If you are a transfer student, that is to say you have credits from another institution of higher learning and you would like to transfer those credits in for consideration of credit at TCC, your first step is to apply for admission to the college. You can do that by going to our TCC website and looking under "Costs and Admission" to learn about the admission process.

Please note, this is a separate admission process just to be a TCC student. This is very different from the health care program admission processes I talked about here.

The next thing would be to submit your official transcripts for consideration to our Enrollment Services office. Official transcripts are obtained when you request copies from your previous college and they either send them directly to our Registrar, or they send them to you and you bring the sealed envelope to our Enrollment Services office. There is also a form you would need to submit that formally requests evaluation of your credits.

Then, we highly recommend that you schedule an appointment with a TCC Pre-allied health advisor. Students who have taken this advice have later told me this was very beneficial for them. Advisors can look at your unofficial transcripts, and assist with education planning so you take the right classes when you need them.

Of course, if you are interested in one of our Baccalaureate programs, please do take advantage of having personalized Navigator services. You can reach them directly at bachelordegrees@tacomacc.edu.

For new students, that is to say, you have never ever attended college, your steps will be a bit different. You will also apply for admission to the college. Again, you can find guidance through the TCC website under the “Costs and Admission” tab. Then, you will be referred for an Accuplacer assessment to determine current levels of math, reading, and writing. You will also be asked to attend what we call New Student Advising Orientation where you will meet with an advisor. They will cover a lot of stuff that is really important for you to know as a new student, including educational planning and enrollment and registration procedures.

*Lastly, there are the continuing students out there. These are the students who have already attended TCC. Your next step will be to schedule an appointment with the “pre-allied health” advisor. Here again, they will be available to answer questions and help with educational planning and registration.

You can find the Advising Office in Bldg. 7 on our main campus. They do offer walk-in appointments, but scheduling might be a bit wonky with the Pandemic status. I recommend you schedule an appointment. You can reach them at (253) 566-6091. Or, go to the Advising web page to do this. On the website, you will also find a Pathways Advising link to help you connect with the health pathway advisors.

*Before we finish, I also wanted to include some resources to assist with financial aid. I found all of these resources by just typing in the words “financial aid” on the TCC web site. Specifically, I wanted to call out the workforce training option listed here. All of the programs I just described today are considered “career training” options. As such, students pursuing these might qualify for funding through workforce education funding streams, which could potentially help with the cost of tuition, fees, and books. Definitely worth your while to check this out!

To see if you qualify for funding, students would need to participate in an orientation, and you would find out before you leave whether or not you qualify for funding support. I would add that even if you don’t qualify for funding, the Workforce Education team has a very capable cadre of advisors to help guide you through enrollment processes.

*That is all I had for today. We appreciate your attendance and sticking through to the very end! I hope that we have answered your questions and provided some insight to help you get started on next steps towards a career in health. We hope to see you soon!

